State of Washington

Interagency Committee for
OUTDOOR RECREATION

Boating Facilities Program Plan

November 2003

IAC's Mission

…Is to foster the protection and enhancement of Washington's natural and outdoor recreation resources for current and future generations. The Board provides funding, technical assistance, research and policy development, coordination, advocacy, and encourages long-term stewardship.

Acknowledgements

Gary Locke, Governor

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Summary

The Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (IAC) manages the Boating Facilities Program, a competitive grant-in-aid program that helps pay for land and facilities needed to support recreational motor boating.

The Boating Facilities Program Policy Plan establishes policies to guide grant-in-aid funding from the outdoor recreation account established by citizen initiative and codified under Chapter 79A.25 RCW. The Boating Facilities Program provides grant funding to various local and state government agencies. Grant funds are used to acquire land and to develop or renovate facilities that serve the users of motorized watercraft.

Boating Facilities Program funds originate from "existing motor vehicle fuel taxes paid by purchasers of fuel used in watercraft and not reclaimed by them as presently allowed by law…." One half of the available funds are allocated to state agencies and one half to local agencies through a competitive grant process.

This Policy Plan explores the broad context of recreational boating in Washington's marine setting, presents background and trends related to funding from the Boating Facilities Program funding, and details policies to guide future program grant-in-aid funding. These policies are intended to guide program funding in a manner that satisfies user needs while being environmentally responsible and sensitive to the needs of local communities.

The policies will be implemented by IAC through modifications to its Boating Facilities Program project evaluation system—the system it uses to weigh the merits of project proposals and to select those that it will fund.

Policies

General Policies

Policy A-1 ***The boating facilities program is intended to facilitate physical access to water for recreational motor boating. While diverse, compatible recreational uses of boating facilities are encouraged, funding shall be targeted at facilities and resources predominantly serving the motorized boating community.***

The boating facilities program was established by a citizen initiative that identified a specific funding source for "marine recreation lands": unreclaimed taxes on gasoline consumed by recreational motor boaters. In recognition of this source, the program shall provide funding for projects that predominantly serve motorized boats. IAC shall serve the nonmotorized boating community through other available funding sources, including but not limited to the Land and Water Conservation Fund, Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program, and the Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA).

Policy A-2 ***The boating facilities program shall assist public agencies in providing quality opportunities for the recreational boating public—opportunities that satisfy user needs in an environmentally responsible manner.***

IAC does not own or operate facilities. In making funding available to facility providers, however, IAC will recognize its responsibility as a partner in the stewardship of the natural environment.

Policy A-3 ***The boating facilities program shall support facilities provided for public recreational boating transient uses.***

The BFP is supported by public funds. Facilities supported by BFP funding are expected to be available to the general public on a first-come, first-served basis. "Transient" facilities include launches and moorage of all kinds. Long-term, permanent, private, and exclusive use facilities are not eligible for BFP support.

Policy A-4 ***IAC boating facilities program funding shall augment, not replace, other sources of funding available to project sponsors.***

Similar to other IAC funding programs, boating facilities program funding shall assist in achieving results that would not be possible without this funding.

Policy A-5 ***IAC shall continue to uphold its commitment to public participation, openness, equity, and efficiency in all its programs, including the boating facilities program.***

Public involvement is the cornerstone of all of IAC's programs. Applicants and sponsors shall be treated with fairness and professionalism. The public shall be given opportunities to affect IAC policy and grant discussions.

Administration Policies

Policy B-1 ***IAC shall work cooperatively with state agencies to ensure that the boating facilities program's administration is based on valid, up-to-date information, including information concerning the size of the motorized fleet, fuel consumption, and public demand for boating facilities.***

IAC shall work closely with the Department of Licensing and the Washington State Department of Transportation to make an estimate of the fuel consumed by recreational boaters. IAC shall gather data on recreation supply and demand trends to help guide expenditures.

Policy B-2 ***An advisory committee for the boating facilities program shall be established and maintained. The committee shall include representatives from user groups, organizations, and agencies affected by boating facilities funding, as well as citizens at large whose interests are representative of the various segments of the boating community.***

Members of this committee shall help develop and implement program policies established by the IAC, including the project evaluation system. Committee members shall have the responsibility to help attain established program goals and objectives. Recommendations by this committee shall reflect program policies and help ensure the integrity of the project evaluation process. The committee shall include the following representation: 5 citizen members, 3 state agency members, and 3 local agency members.

Policy B-3 ***IAC shall review matching share amounts and grant limits on a schedule that coincides with the Department of Licensing's determination of marine fuel consumption.***

In the interests of openness and equity, IAC's review will include opportunity for applicants and sponsors to make their needs known.

Policy B-4 ***IAC shall reserve the right to establish limits on maximum grant amounts ("ceilings"). IAC may waive, lower, raise or otherwise adjust maximum grant amounts.***

The boating facilities program funding is limited. By establishing maximum grant amounts, IAC can better attain program goals. IAC will seek

sponsor and public guidance when reviewing maximum grant policies.

Policy B-5 ***IAC shall allow grant funds to be used for architecture and engineering costs (A&E) equal to that allowable by OFM in its biennial capital budget instructions; costs associated with securing permits shall be considered A&E and may be contracted separately from capital costs.***

79A.25 RCW authorizes use of "marine recreation land" funds for acquisition and capital development. IAC recognizes that development in navigable waters depends on a complex and time-consuming permitting process, and it is appropriate to recognize permitting costs as a reimbursable expense.

Funding Priority Policies

Policy C-1 ***IAC shall encourage projects that facilitate the use of trailered motorboats.***

Approximately 80 percent of Washington's motorized recreational fleet depends on the use of trailers to access the water.

Policy C-2 ***IAC shall encourage projects that maximize the efficient use of existing sites and facilities.***

Use of existing sites can help avoid the need for time-consuming and costly permits. Renovation can extend facility service life and reduce need for costly maintenance and repairs.

Policy C-3 ***Local agency sponsors shall be required to provide a matching share. Matching shares may include value of donated land, labor or services, cash, and costs directly associated with securing permits. Funding priority shall be given to those projects whose matching share demonstrates greater non-government contributions.***

Matching shares help maximize the effective use of state dollars. Contributions of money, materials, or services by volunteers, the private sector, nonprofit organizations, and others stretch scarce funding and help demonstrate which projects have broad public support. IAC shall give funding priority to project applications that provide greater matching shares.

Policy C-4 ***IAC shall encourage projects that use design standards and construction techniques intended to maximize service life and minimize routine maintenance.***

Projects can often incorporate design elements and construction standards that reduce maintenance needs. Adequate consideration of maintenance during the design phase can result in long-term savings that far outweigh most short-term construction cost increases.

Policy C-5 ***IAC shall give priority to projects under immediate threat.***

Lands suitable for marine recreation purposes are in demand for competing uses. In some instances, timely action is needed to acquire or develop land for public marine recreation before the opportunity is lost.

Part 1. Recreational Boating

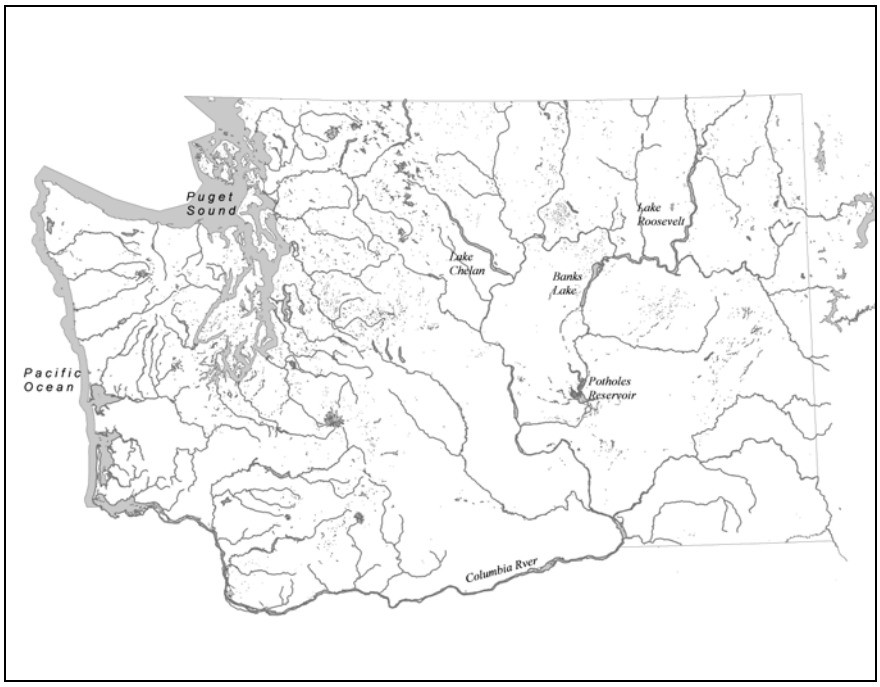
The Marine Resource

"The most notable… topographical features in [Washington]… state are the salt-water areas—the ocean and the ocean shore, Puget Sound, the Strait of Juan de Fuca, and the Strait of Georgia. Pacific coastal waters off Washington and in U.S. jurisdiction total 226 square miles. The ocean shore extends about 157 miles long and the tidal shoreline about 3,026 miles…. Puget Sound which is about 90 miles long from the Strait of Juan de Fuca to Olympia, covers 561 square miles…. Eighteen hundred miles of indented shoreline and the islands in the sound provide unending scenic variety and abundant recreational opportunities. Hood Canal, a natural inland waterway off Puget Sound, extends inland about 60 miles. Its shoreline of 242 miles provides outstanding opportunities for boating….

"The Strait of Juan de Fuca, which connects the ocean and Puget Sound, and the Strait of Georgia, which is north of the San Juan Islands, are other large salt-water areas with fine opportunities for fishing and boating. The Strait of Juan de Fuca has a Washington shoreline of 178 miles, the Strait of Georgia 98 miles."[1]

Inland, Washington State offers 8,000 lakes (including 3,093 high mountain lakes over 2,500 feet in elevation) and 50,000 miles of waterway from the 750-mile Columbia River to local salmon-bearing streams.

Little wonder people wish to boat for recreation.



[1] *Washington Statewide Outdoor Recreation and Open Space Plan*, State of Washington Department of Commerce and Economic Development, 1967, page 22

Boaters and Boats

Statewide, between 350,000 and 400,000 people of all ages boat for recreation.[2] Statistically defensible boater demographics specific to Washington State are not available. National demographics, however, may be applicable. According to a national report, "…white males represent a larger group than others, but not as much as some other types of outdoor recreation such as hunting and fishing. Income is correlated to boating recreation and boat ownership in the middle to upper income levels. There is a correlation between education and participation in recreational boating. Those with graduate or professional degrees and college graduates are slightly more likely to participate in recreational boating. Ethnic minorities are under-represented in boating and boat ownership, but the reasons for this are unclear, although income-related reasons are plausible."[3]

There is a relatively strong relationship between motor boating and participation in fishing.[4] In general, the smaller the motorboat, with the exception of personal watercraft, the more likely it is to be used for fishing.

It is of interest to note that the National Marine Manufacturers Association ranks Washington State 10th among the 50 states for combined boat, motor, trailer and accessory 2001 purchases in 2002, a figure estimated at $464 million.[5]

Less data is available concerning non-motor boat (canoe, kayak) user demographics. One of the few available studies of paddle boaters found that males out-numbered females by 3 to 1, with 87% of study respondents between the ages of 30 and 60, and 79% of respondents reporting a 4-year college degree or higher.[6]

Boaters are most likely to reside in the county in which their boat is registered.

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[2] Beckwith Associates, statewide recreation participation survey, results published in *An Assessment of Outdoor Recreation in Washington State*, IAC, 2002

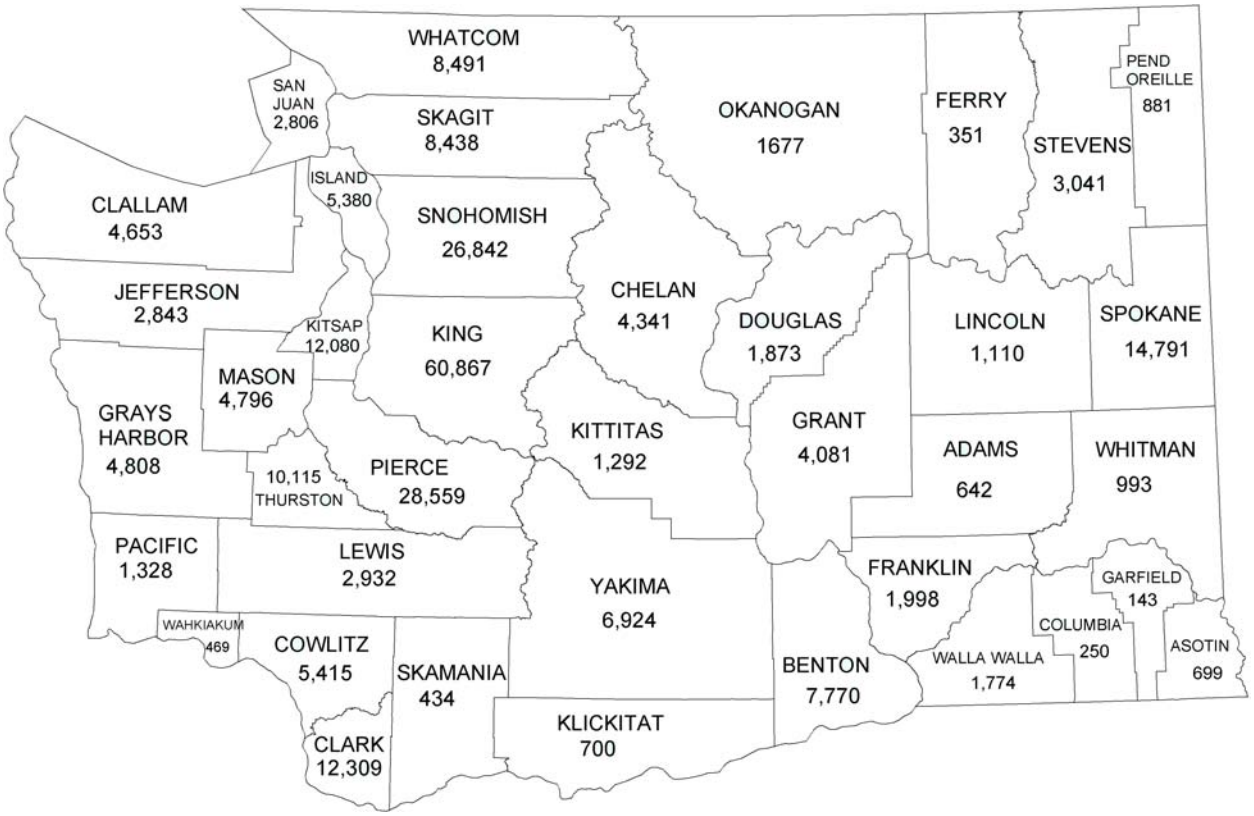
[3] *Factors Related to Recreational Boating Participation in the United States, A Review of the Literature*, Responsive Management, August 2000

[4] *Factors Related to Recreational Boating Participation in the United States, A Review of the Literature*, Responsive Management, August 2000

[5] Press release from the National Marine Manufacturers Association, February 2003

[6] Paddling the Lower Columbia River, 1996 paddlers survey, William J. Green, Robert F. Goodwin, Washington Sea Grant Program, University of Washington

Boat Registration by County



Source: BST reporting Dept of Licensing data

As shown in the following table, most people who boat use motorboats.

The Recreational Boating Fleet in Washington State[7]	
Type of Boat	**Estimated Number**
Motorboat 0 to 15.99 Feet	71,035
Motorboat 16 to 25.9 Feet	108,784
Motorboat 26 Feet or More	25,978
Sail Boats	3,653
Personal Watercraft	17,454
Other (Canoes, kayaks, etc.)	84,024
Total, All Types	**310,928**

That there are probably more people who boat than there are boats is not surprising: people like to boat with family and friends.

[7] Data source: BST Associates, Statewide Recreational Boating Study, 2001

Motor boats 25.9 feet and less in length, including personal watercraft, generally need to be launched before use, whether off a trailer on a ramp, rail, sling, or hoist. Motor boats 26 feet and larger will most often be kept on water, typically in a marina setting, when not in use.

Canoes, kayaks, and other smaller non-motor boats are typically kept at the user's home.

Trends in the Recreational Fleet.

From 1990 through 2000, the recreational boating fleet in Washington State grew at an average annual rate of 1.9%. The fleet numbered 214,043 registered vessels in 1990 and grew to 258,923 registered vessels in 2000, according to Department of Licensing records. Growth in the number of registered recreational boats slowed in the second half of that period, and averaged 1.1% per year.

Statewide Trends by Boat Length

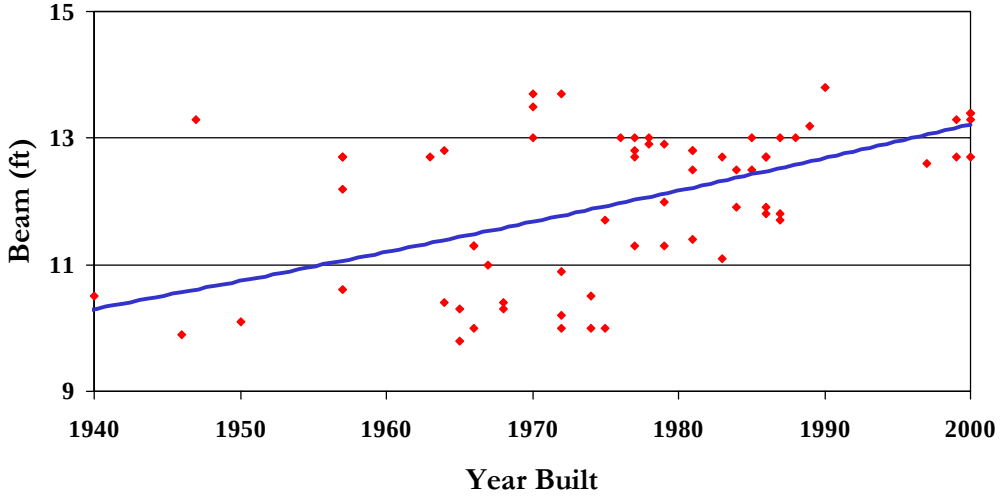
Year	Under 16'	16' to 20'	21' to 30'	31' to 40'	41' to 50'	51' to 60'	Over 60'	Total Boats
1990	85,979	88,226	30,385	7,190	1,868	277	118	214,043
1991	89,097	90,804	30,725	7,364	2,025	306	142	220,463
1992	91,321	93,276	31,514	7,752	2,186	348	158	226,555
1993	95,424	96,130	32,188	8,119	2,304	373	187	234,725
1994	95,657	97,677	32,041	8,371	2,390	384	219	236,739
1995	99,920	100,469	32,511	8,507	2,486	401	258	244,552
1996	101,768	101,366	32,673	8,640	2,522	404	312	247,685
1997	102,600	101,278	32,442	8,695	2,593	419	204	248,231
1998	103,020	103,336	32,984	8,956	2,701	449	255	251,701
1999	102,198	103,413	33,539	9,252	2,802	481	290	251,975
2000	104,049	106,837	34,912	9,422	2,885	493	325	258,923
Growth Rates								
1990-2000	1.9%	1.9%	1.4%	2.7%	4.4%	5.9%	10.7%	1.9%
1990-1995	3.1%	2.6%	1.4%	3.4%	5.9%	7.7%	16.9%	2.7%
1995-2000	0.8%	1.2%	1.4%	2.1%	3.0%	4.2%	4.7%	1.1%

Source: BST Associates, Department of Licensing Data

Boat buyers are generally selecting motorboats that are larger in all dimensions - longer, higher and wider. As shown above, only vessels 30 feet or less grew at rates equal to or less than the state average. The fleet of boats longer than 30 feet grew substantially faster than the state average. Within the group of boats longer than 30 feet, each ten-foot increment saw a rate of growth greater than the next smaller one. The number of boats 31 to 40 feet long grew by 2.7% per year, those 41 to 50 feet grew 4.4% per year, those 51 to 60 feet grew 5.9% per year, and those over 60 feet grew by 10.7% per year.

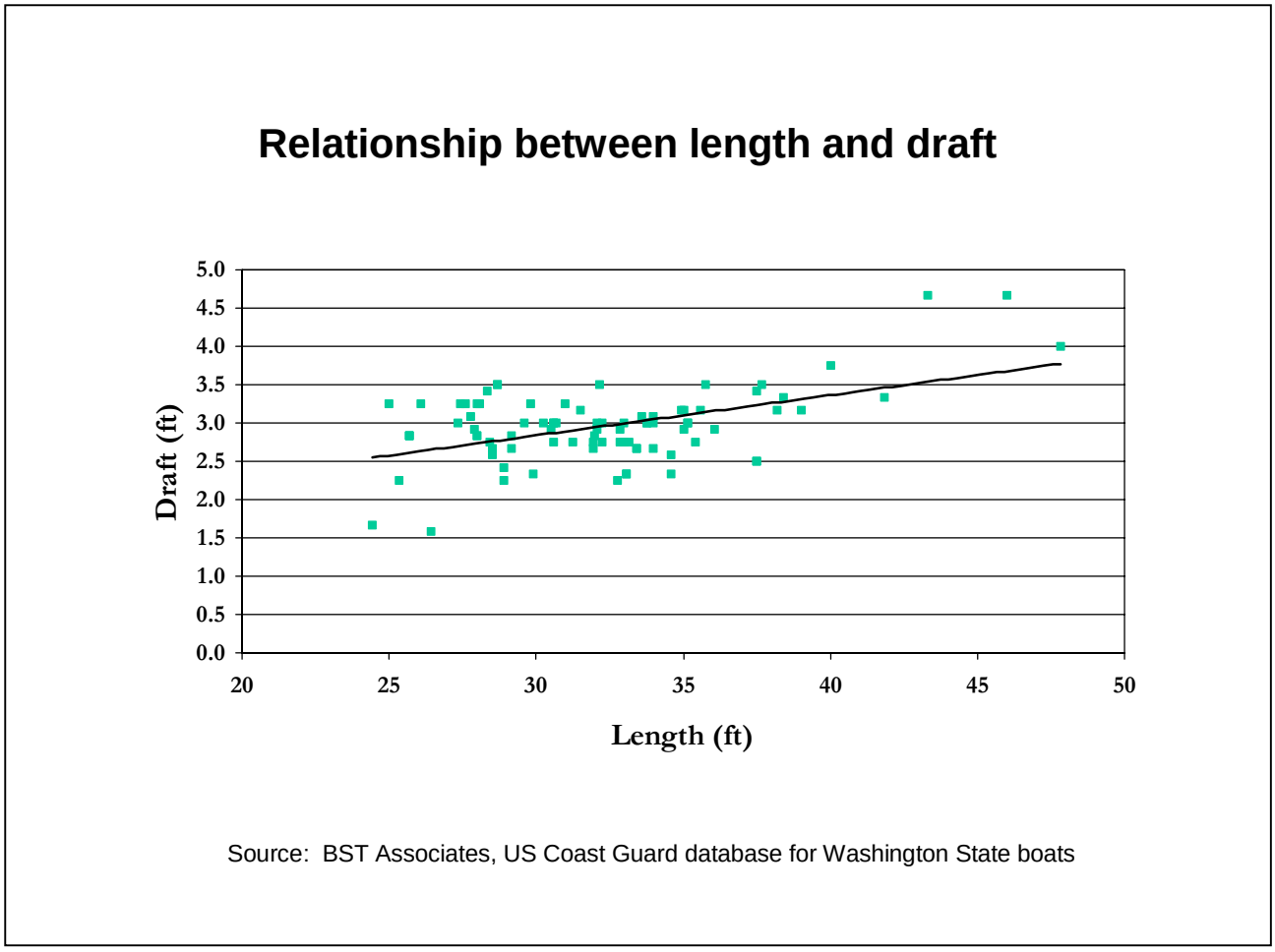
The faster growth in vessels longer than 30 feet has implications for agencies that provide moorage for recreational vessels. Facilities that were designed for a certain average vessel size 20 or 30 years ago may have a capacity of fewer boats now, because of the increase in vessel length. Furthermore, as the average vessel has become longer, the average beam for a given length of vessel has increased over time.

The relationship between length and beam is shown below. This table analyzes U.S. Coast Guard data for recreational vessels in Washington State. Based on the year that the vessel was built, the average beam of a 35 foot-long powerboat increased from 11 feet in 1955 to more than 13 feet in 2000. While this example is for one specific length of boat, this same trend has occurred across all vessel lengths and types (sail and power).



Source: BST Associates, US Coast Guard database for Washington State boats

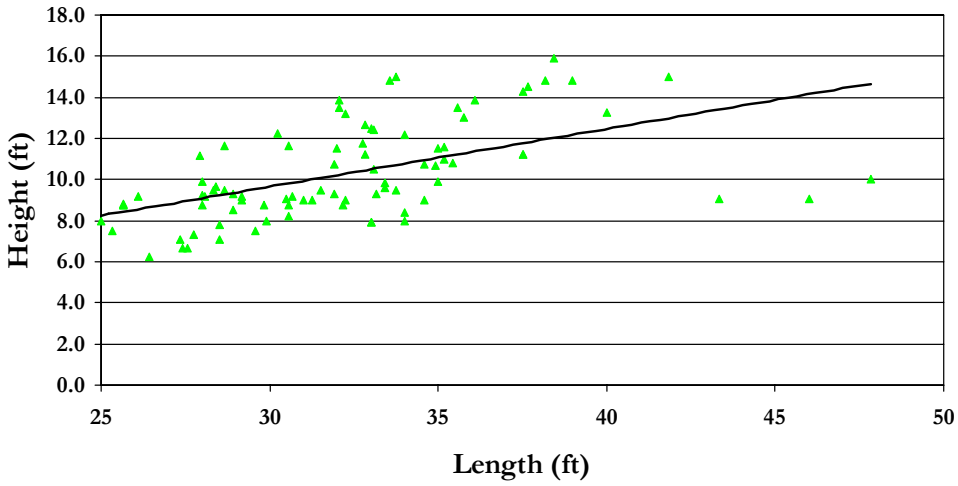
The relationship between vessel length and draft is also important. As shown below, the draft of recreational powerboats typically ranges from 2.5 feet to 4.0 feet, for vessels up to 40 feet in length. As the length exceeds 40 feet, draft may exceed 4.5 feet. For all but a few very large sailboats, the typical keel depth is 6 feet, with 8 feet as the maximum.



Source: BST Associates, US Coast Guard database for Washington State boats

Vessels are also getting higher. In many cases, this is a factor of the increased length of vessels. As length increases from 24 feet to 39 feet, average vessel height grows from 8 feet to nearly 13 feet. For marinas with covered moorage or boathouses, this trend is beginning to create difficulties. Put simply, older facilities cannot physically accommodate the demands of the larger boats in the recreational fleet, potentially resulting in excess capacity for smaller boats and a lack of capacity for larger boats.

Relationship between length and height



Source: BST Associates, US Coast Guard database for Washington State power boats

The Future of Recreational Boating

In 2003, IAC completed a document called *Estimates of Future Participation in Outdoor Recreation in Washington State*. Based on statewide participation data and the National Survey on Recreation and the Environment, the document discussed future growth of recreational boating. In the document, IAC concludes that motor boating will grow quite slowly, at about 10% over ten years, with the potential for a plateau or even decline after 10 years to the year 2020. Slow growth in the inventory of boating facilities and continued decline in fishing participation are likely causes.

This conclusion agrees with an independent regression analysis that linked boat ownership to population, personal income and employment.[8] The analysis was done with independent variables taken from forecasts by the Washington State Office of Financial Management and the Governor's Forecast Council. The results indicated that the recreational boating fleet in Washington State is expected to grow from 258,923 boats in 2000 to 285,380 boats by 2010 under most likely conditions. This amounts to average annual growth of 1.0% for the forecast period, down from the annual growth experienced over the past ten years (1.9%).

Under the low growth scenario, the fleet remains relatively constant with a net loss of 11,000 smaller boats (under 16 feet in length) compensated for by growth in larger boats. Under the high growth scenario, the recreational fleet reaches 313,400 boats, resulting in a gain of 55,000 new boats. The range from low to high is based upon a confidence interval of 95%. The most likely forecast is the mid-point of the forecast.

As has occurred in recent years, the growth is expected to be larger among longer boats. Average growth in larger boats (greater than 30 feet in length) is expected to exceed 2% per year, while smaller boats are expected to increase at less than 2% per year under most likely conditions. However, the small to mid-size boats will continue to make up the largest portion of the recreational boating fleet.

It should be emphasized that these forecasts are unconstrained with respect to unknown factors including the state of the economy and whether sufficient moorage will exist.

[8] Statewide Recreational Boating Study, BST Associates under contract to IAC, 2001

Existing Access Facilities

Statewide, boaters can use about 900 open-to-the-public boat launches[9] and 340 public transient sites[10] (marinas or destination sites with docks, floats, or piers).

Launches

In 1996-97, IAC inventoried motorboat launch sites open to the public. This total includes both public and private ownership. Overall, private ownership accounted for about 19% of the inventory. Federal agencies were responsible for 19%; local government, 27%; and state government 41%. Most state-owned sites belonged to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).

Motor Boat Launch Site Ownership	
Type of Owner	*Sites owned*
Non profit organization, conservation district, public works dept	5
Park Districts	6
Native American Tribes	8
County	16
City/Town	22
Public Utility District	36
Port Districts	56
Parks Departments	98
Privately owned, open to the public	115
Federal agencies	177
State agencies	371
Total	**910**

A "typical" motorboat launch site consisted of a single concrete ramp with a gravel parking lot with a capacity of between 20 and 25 vehicles towing trailers. Most sites (about 55%) had a restroom of some kind. Fewer sites offered improvements ranging from trash receptacles to loading floats. Only a handful of launches (about 6%) are associated with full services including fuel.

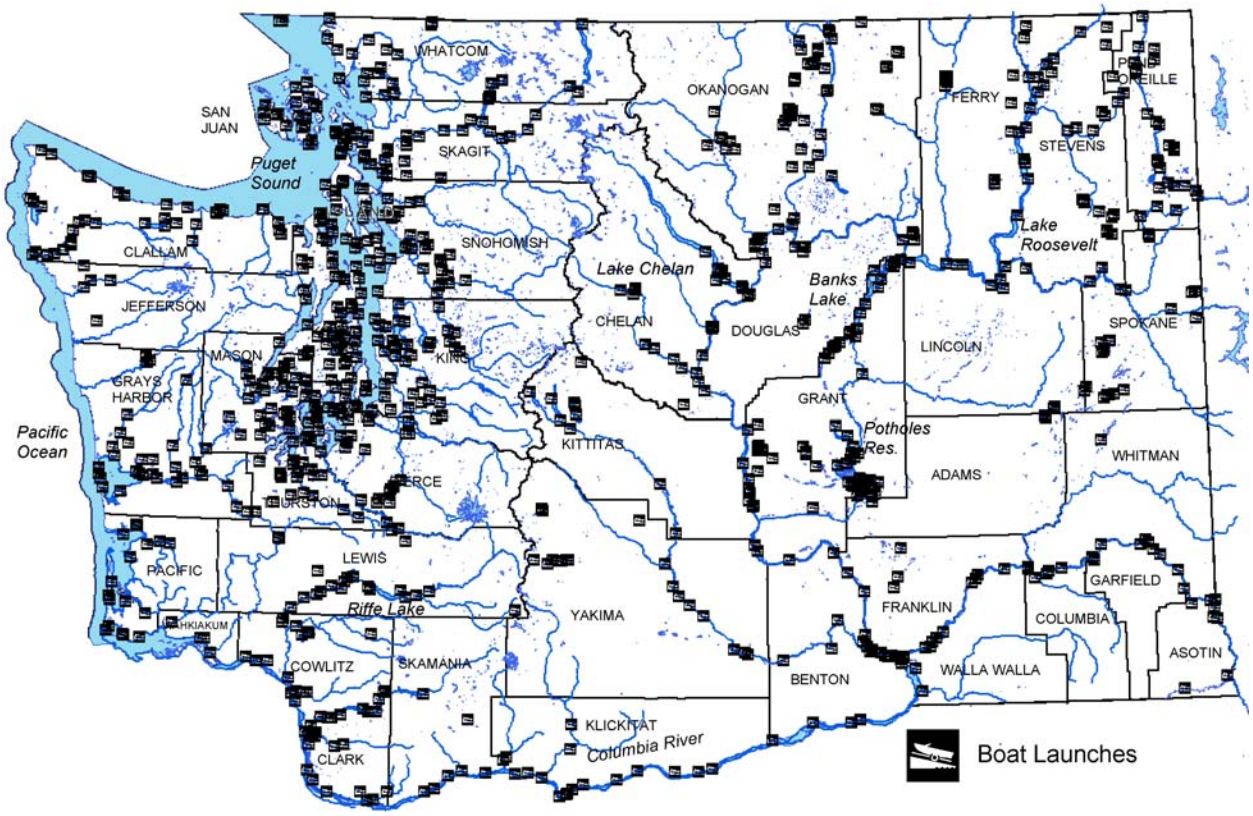
[9] Number determined in statewide field survey 1996-97, IAC
[10] BST Associates, Statewide Recreational Boating Study, 2001

Boat launch sites are scattered across Washington State. The following table lists launch sites by county.

Number of Boat Launch Sites by County			
Adams County	4 Sites	**Lewis County**	21 Sites
Asotin County	9 Sites	**Lincoln County**	13 Sites
Benton County	16 Sites	**Mason County**	35 Sites
Chelan County	22 Sites	**Okanogan County**	63 Sites
Clallam County	39 Sites	**Pacific County**	17 Sites
Clark County	16 Sites	**Pend Oreille County**	30 Sites
Columbia County	4 Sites	**Pierce County**	38 Sites
Cowlitz County	29 Sites	**San Juan County**	18 Sites
Douglas County	11 Sites	**Skagit County**	38 Sites
Ferry County	12 Sites	**Skamania County**	8 Sites
Franklin County	16 Sites	**Snohomish County**	29 Sites
Garfield County	5 Sites	**Spokane County**	21 Sites
Grant County	75 Sites	**Stevens County**	37 Sites
Grays Harbor	31 Sites	**Thurston County**	26 Sites
Island County	20 Sites	**Wahkiakum County**	4 Sites
Jefferson County	25 Sites	**Walla Walla County**	8 Sites
King County	40 Sites	**Whatcom County**	29 Sites
Kitsap County	33 Sites	**Whitman County**	7 Sites
Kittitas County	13 Sites	**Yakima County**	18 Sites
Klickitat County	17 Sites		897[11]

[11] Some sites have more than one launch facility.

The following map depicts statewide distribution of motorboat launches.[12]



Motorboat launches (IAC 1995)

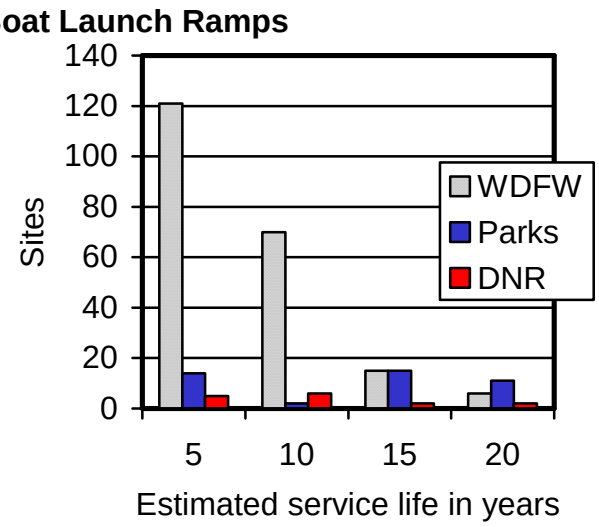
Boat Launch Condition and Service Life

Statewide, the condition of the "average" launch ramp is good: estimated to have just over ten years service life remaining.[13]

In the state agency inventory, State Parks launch sites are above average, with an average estimated remaining service life of 12.5 years. Other state-owned launch ramps, however, trend toward the fair-to-poor end of the scale, including DNR at 8.4 years and WDFW, 7.8 years.

[12] Inventory details including interactive maps are available on the Internet at www.iac.wa.gov

[13] In 1996, IAC cooperated with State Parks, Department of Natural Resources, and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife to develop a scale (called the Meyer Scale, after its principal author) against which launch conditions could be compared in order to derive an estimate of remaining service life. The Meyer scale uses 20 years as the "benchmark" of the estimated service life of a brand new facility, and less than 5 years as the benchmark of launch ramps in undesirable condition.



Of the 910 launch sites inventoried statewide, 618 were locally or state owned. Of these 618, 231 had an estimated service life of less than five years; of these 231 sites, about 150 belonged to WDFW.

Private Launches

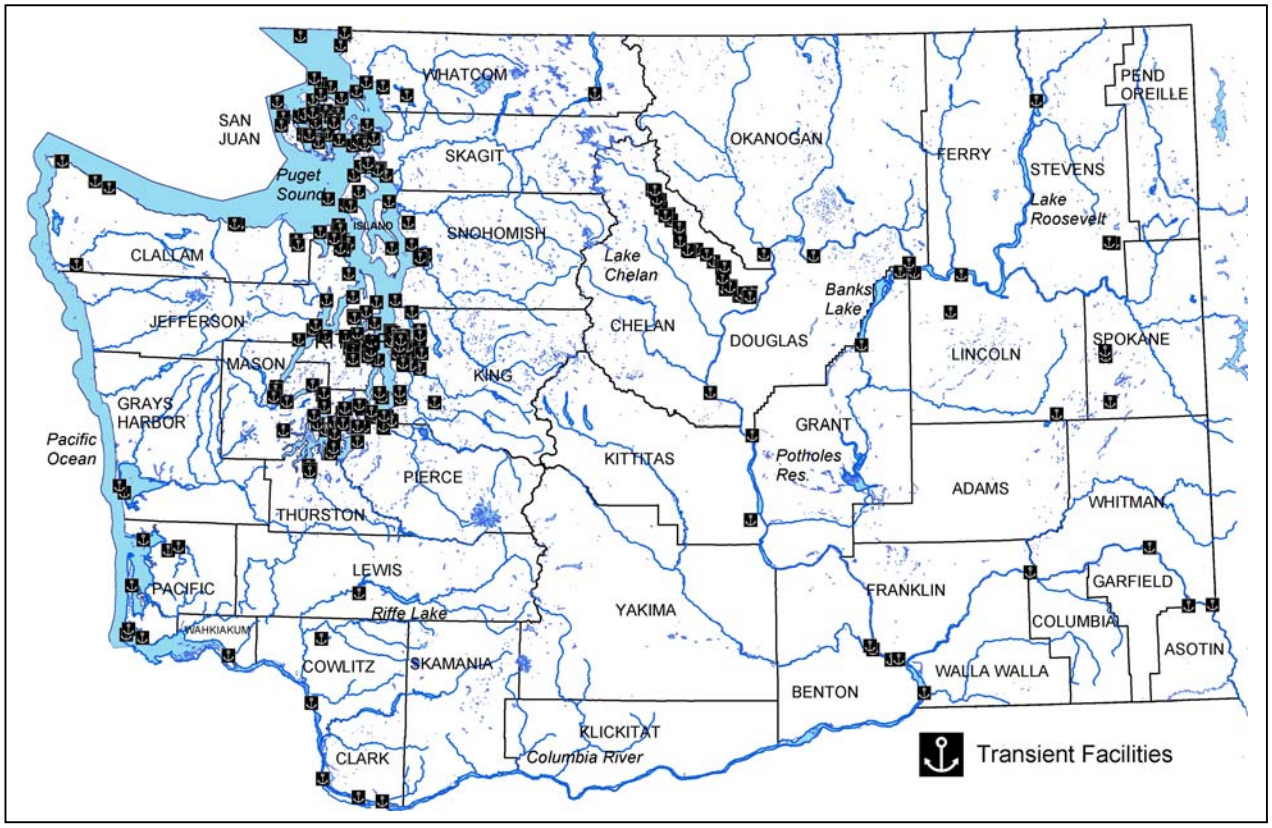
The exact number of private, exclusive use[14] launches is not known. The number may be considerable. For example, on Lake Entiat, a 43-mile Columbia River reservoir behind Rocky Reach Dam, there are as many as 43 private boat ramps (one per mile), along with seven public ramps.[15] The condition, capacity, and use of private ramps are likewise unknown.

[14] Not open to the general public.
[15] Lake Entiat private launch count from Chelan PUD, February 2003

Transient Facilities

Transient facilities are defined here as facilities that allow a recreational motorboat to tie-up for a limited period of time from a few hours to several days.[16] Sites offering transient facilities include marinas, local parks, and State Marine Parks. Some sites will offer boating-oriented services such as fuel, supplies, pump-outs or other sanitation devices, and showers.

In 1999, IAC sponsored a survey of open-to-the-public transient sites. The results, which are not exhaustive,[17] are depicted in the following map.



[16] IAC's current policy defines "transient" as no more than 14 consecutive days

[17] Not all marinas chose to respond to the survey. Further, marinas that were not open to the general public at the time of the survey were not included in the survey.

Inventory of Marina Facilities by Region

Central Puget Sound, defined as King and Snohomish counties, has an estimated 82 facilities (23.3% of state). Moorage is provided at:

- 10,779 permanent slips,
- 340 dedicated transient slips,
- 11,848 feet of lineal floats/docks[18],
- 288 boathouses,
- 1,459 dry storage spaces[19], and,
- 2 mooring buoys.

Eastern Washington, defined to include Asotin, Benton, Chelan, Columbia, Douglas, Franklin, Garfield, Grant, Lincoln, Okanogan, Spokane, Stevens, Walla Walla, and Whitman counties, has 70 facilities (19.9% of state). Moorage is provided at:

- 1,673 permanent slips,
- 722 dedicated transient slips,
- 6,997 feet of lineal floats/docks,
- 288 boathouses,
- 10 dry storage spaces, and,
- no mooring buoys.[20]

NE Puget Sound, defined to include Island, Skagit, and Whatcom counties, has an estimated 30 facilities (8.5% of state). Moorage is provided at:

- 7,272 permanent slips,
- 104 dedicated transient slips,
- 10,090 feet of lineal floats/docks,
- 324 boathouses,
- 305 dry storage spaces, and,
- 13 mooring buoys.

NW Puget Sound, defined to include Jefferson and Kitsap counties, has an estimated 42 facilities (11.9% of state). Moorage is provided at:

- 3,350 permanent slips,
- 399 dedicated transient slips,
- 12,158 feet of lineal floats/docks,
- 96 boathouses,
- no dry storage spaces, and,
- 70 mooring buoys.

The Peninsula, defined to include Clallam and Grays Harbor counties, has an estimated 13 facilities (3.7% of state). Moorage is provided at:

- 1,912 permanent slips,
- 250 dedicated transient slips,

[18] These linear floats do not have slips or finger piers, but may include end ties.

[19] This only includes reported dry storage spaces located at a marina.

[20] In contrast, in the late 1990's Chelan County PUD counted 1,062 private buoys, 935 private docks, 411 private slips, and 139 private floats on Lake Chelan. Data from recreation staff, Chelan County PUD, 2003.

- 8,164 feet of lineal floats/docks,
- 78 boathouses,
- no dry storage spaces, and,
- 6 mooring buoys.

The San Juan Islands, which comprises San Juan County, has an estimated 34 facilities (9.7% of state). Moorage is provided at:

- 1,492 permanent slips,
- 416 dedicated transient slips,
- 7,425 feet of lineal floats/docks,
- 1 boathouse,
- no dry storage spaces, and,
- 121 mooring buoys.

South Puget Sound, defined to include Mason, Pierce and Thurston counties, has an estimated 66 facilities (18.8% of state). Moorage is provided at:

- 5,366 permanent slips,
- 72 dedicated transient slips,
- 8,924 feet of lineal floats/docks,
- 786 boathouses,
- 763 dry storage spaces, and,
- 75 mooring buoys.

Southwest Washington, defined as Clark, Cowlitz, Lewis, Pacific and Wahkiakum counties, has an estimated 15 facilities (4.7% of state). Moorage is provided at:

- 2,318 permanent slips,
- 213 dedicated transient slips,
- 1,647 feet of lineal floats/docks,
- no boathouses,
- 100 dry storage spaces, and,
- no mooring buoys.

Transient Site Condition and Service Life

(Data not available.)

Existing Levels of Moorage Utilization

Washington State's permanent moorage facilities are well utilized. Overall, the statewide occupancy rate is 92.5% during the peak season (May through September) and 74.2% in the off-peak season (October through April).

Estimated Permanent Occupancy Rates by Region[21]		
Region	**Percent Occupancy**	
	Peak	**Off-peak**
Central Puget Sound	98.4%	95.4%
Eastern Washington	86.0%	23.8%
NE Puget Sound	95.9%	93.1%
NW Puget Sound	88.1%	53.0%
Peninsula	69.0%	46.4%
San Juan Islands	94.8%	69.6%
South Puget Sound	92.1%	74.7%
SW Washington	87.5%	47.7%
Statewide	92.5%	74.2%

Occupancy rates exceeding 95% are considered full utilization because there is always a friction factor of approximately 5% that accounts for change of location, boat sales/upgrades and like considerations. There were also several reports about unused slips in the 30-foot (and under) categories as well as reports of significant shortages for slips greater than 30 feet in length.[22]

In most of Puget Sound, occupancy rates are above 93% throughout the year. The exception is N.E. Puget Sound (e.g., Kitsap and Jefferson counties), which includes some seasonal use facilities.

Occupancy rates are also low in the Peninsula and Southwest Washington regions due primarily to lack of fishing opportunities. This is particularly significant in Westport, Ilwaco and other coastal areas.

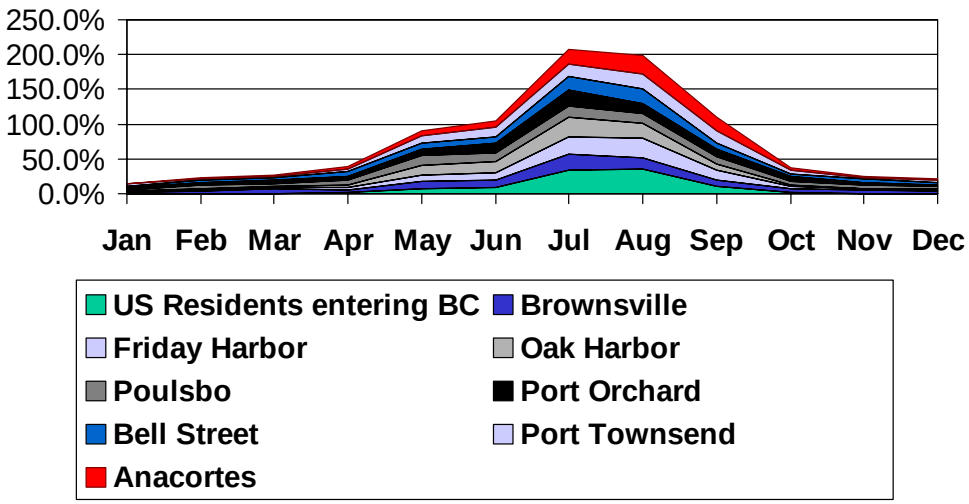
In some areas, the peak season does not start until June or July (e.g., Lake Chelan and Lake Roosevelt) and thus the utilization rates are lower in May. Boats are typically removed from the water in most Eastern Washington locations in the off-peak season.

Transient moorage activity also has a substantial peaking component. As shown below, the demand for transient moorage is very low during winter, but peaks strongly in the summer.

[21] These are weighted averages based on number of permanent slips for marinas reporting occupancy. Source: BST Associates, Facilities Survey

[22] Source: BST Associates, Facilities Survey

Peaking & Transient Moorage Usage



In more southerly locations in Puget Sound, transient moorage activity is focused in the months of May through September, with little activity from October through April. However, activity during the shoulder months (May and September) is weather-dependent.

Future Facility Needs

Current access is considered by many to be insufficient.[23] This perception is not new. In 1964, the text supporting Initiative 215, proposing to establish the marine recreation lands act and "an interagency committee for outdoor recreation," read, in part,

> "Population is booming, public access to our waters is shrinking, and the price of waterfront land is soaring. Many a fisherman's favorite stream, many a family's favorite picnic spot or beach is already gone. Boaters already find long lines at launching sites and moorages."

One of the early state comprehensive outdoor recreation plans (SCORP) proposed a boat launch construction standard of one boat launch site every five miles on Puget Sound, the coast, and major rivers.[24] The same document identified a shortage of 46 boat launch sites on the Strait of Juan de Fuca and the Coast; 25 sites on Hood Canal and the San Juan Islands; 80 sites on Puget Sound; 388 sites on lakes and reservoirs over 1,000 acres; and 300 sites on lakes and reservoirs under 1,000 acres. If this standard had achieved, the 750-mile Columbia River today would have 150 launches instead of the roughly 97 launches currently available, or 64% of the goal.

By 1990, SCORP reports no longer made numerical determination of "satisfaction," nor numerical recommendations for future development, instead implying that growth in participation would require additional or expanded sites over time.[25]

As stated in a more recent report,

> "The future, in short, defies mathematics. Nevertheless, there is value in recognizing and attempting to anticipate changes in recreation participation."[26]

With this caution in mind, it is not unreasonable to consider an annual projected growth rate of 1%, and conclude that recreational boating would appear to have a need for future increases in the facility inventory.

Viewed simply, 10% growth in boating over the coming decade could mean, for example, the need for an additional 90 boat launches statewide. However, demand for adequate facilities could also mean improving existing sites: for example, making parking more efficient, adding launch lanes, repairing ramps, adding courtesy docks to

[23] Boater responses to IAC Internet survey, 2002. Asked to respond to an open-ended question about the biggest problem faced when they go boating, people most often cited a shortage of adequate facilities (430 of the 1,215 responding).
[24] *Washington Statewide Outdoor Recreation and Open Space Plan*, Department of Commerce and Economic Development, 1967.
[25] *Washington Outdoors: Assessment and Policy Plan 1990-1995*, IAC, 1989
[26] Estimates of Future Participation in Outdoor Recreation in Washington State, IAC, 2003

make launching more efficient, and so on. Further analysis of the launch inventory, especially accurate use data, is needed to better determine the true need for launch facilities.

There is better utilization data on moorage to make a numerical forecast. As illustrated in the following table, if boaters continue their current preference for moorage, there is an expected demand for 5,066 new wet moorage slips (e.g., ranging from 2,114 under the low growth scenario to 8,019 under the high growth scenario) and 4,652 new dry storage slips over the next ten years under the most likely conditions (e.g., ranging from 1,845 under the low growth scenario to 7,459 under the high growth scenario).

Unconstrained Forecast of Needed Slips in Washington State, 2000-2010

Wet Moorage Forecast	**16' to 20'**	**21' to 30'**	**31' to 40'**	**41' to 50'**	**51' to 60'**	**Over 60'**	**Total**
Low	294	436	777	486	85	35	2,114
Most Likely	691	1,655	1,515	857	186	162	5,066
High	1,088	2,874	2,252	1,228	288	288	8,019
Dry Storage Forecast	**16' to 20'**	**21' to 30'**	**31' to 40'**	**41' to 50'**	**51' to 60'**	**Over 60'**	**Total**
Low	1,438	260	147	-	-	-	1,845
Most Likely	3,379	987	286	-	-	-	4,652
High	5,320	1,714	426	-	-	-	7,459

Source: BST Associates, Data from Department of Licensing, OFM, Forecast Council

The key word to consider is “unconstrained.” Obstacles to new moorage development include time- and resource-consuming permit requirements, high costs of marine recreation land and facilities, high competition for available land, and lack of capital development funds among public agencies.[27]

Dollar costs alone are imposing. Based on year 2003 applications to the Boating Facilities Program for grant-in-aid assistance, an estimated inclusive cost for a single transient moorage slip is roughly $25,000. Taking the unconstrained “most likely” need for about 5,000 wet moorage slips at this estimated cost, there is the potential need for a capital investment of $125 million in the next several years, accompanied by an unknown but not insignificant maintenance and operation cost for years to follow. In a similar manner, the low end-cost for a new boat launch site can be estimated at around $500,000 to $750,000, indicating a potential for a minimum statewide capital investment of between $45 to $67 million to pay for a ten percent addition to the boat launch inventory (about 90 launches). [28]

With these financial indicators in mind, it is critical to have a good understanding of the

[27] Agency responses to Internet survey, IAC 2002
[28] Cost data from Project Information System (PRISM), IAC, 2003

boating community before making recommendations for public investment in facilities.

What Boaters Want

Information gathered in the field.

In 1995, IAC co-sponsored a study of recreational motor access on the Columbia River.[29] Boaters were interviewed via intercept surveys during the high use season. Included in the survey were questions about services and amenities most wanted on the Columbia River.

In summary, the kinds of services boaters wanted depended on the kind of boat they operated. For boats 26 feet and under, respondents wanted car parking, fish cleaning stations, dump stations, groceries, and drinking water in that order. Respondents who owned boats over 26 feet wanted sewage pump-outs, electrical connections, mooring buoys, showers, and swimming and picnic areas.

Information from focus groups.

In 2001, IAC co-sponsored a series of focus group discussions on boating issues, in order to better determine boaters' perceptions of facility needs.[30] Participants were operators of larger boats, usually over 26 feet in length. The following lists responses to a series of questions used at each focus group.

- Most of these boaters own their boat to fish, cruise and (for sail boaters) to sail and race.
- Concerning boat use, with the decline in fishing opportunities, there has been a move toward more cruising and away from fishing.
- Most boaters take trips less than ten miles to get to their boat moorage or to launch their boat. However, some boaters (especially those in Spokane) travel more than 50 miles to reach their preferred boating areas.
- Boaters typically take shorter trips during the day or evenings, which may last one to four hours. However, longer day trips are taken during the weekends and during vacations, which may last two days to two or more weeks. These longer trips mainly occur in the summer.
- These boaters generally stay in the body of water that is closest to their home or moorage. However, nearly all focus group respondents indicated that they also take extended trips to other areas (especially the San Juans).
- These boaters travel varying distances depending on their location, distance to preferred boating areas, weather, time of day (evening vs. weekend), time of year (peak vs. non-peak) and other factors. The minimum trip on the water was estimated at 20 to 30 minutes and the maximum was estimated at 12 hours per day of cruising time.

[29] "Survey of Columbia River Boaters at Selected Ramps and Transient Moorage on the Washington Shore, Summer, 1995," James Pacheco, School of Marine Affairs, University of Washington, Seattle

[30] The focus groups were conducted by BST Associates in Seattle, Kennewick, Spokane, Chelan, Edmonds, Kalama, and Olympia, and reported in the Statewide Recreational Boating Study, previously cited.

- Boaters had a variety of proposed improvements to offer, again depending on their location and preferred destinations. Improvements generally included more access to the water or improvements to the condition of existing facilities (especially more moorage, dinghy docks, boat ramps, and mooring buoys) and more services (restrooms, pumpouts, and fuel docks).
- Boaters like to "get away from it all", to natural and quiet areas. In these locations, they want access to land to walk, explore and congregate by various means (either rowing to a beach, going to transient moorage, using dinghy docks, etc.). However, boaters also like to shop and go to restaurants. In addition, activities for children are very important on boating trips.
- The preferred water depth ranges from seven to ten feet, but this depends on the type and size of the boat and the boating area. Generally, boaters felt that 10 feet was sufficient for most tides.
- Participants were unanimous that they don't get out as frequently as they would like to. Most felt that time constraints limited the number and duration of boating trips. Other factors (weather, congestion, cost of fuel and conflicts with other boaters) inhibited or prevented boating more frequently.
- To encourage boating, participants felt there is a need for more facilities, including moorage (permanent and transient), mooring buoys, boat ramps, pumpouts and other related facilities. In addition, boaters felt better fishing conditions, less congestion and conflict, and better law enforcement would encourage more boating.
- Asked what factors would discourage boating in the future, most participants were concerned about the price of fuel (and the overall cost of boat ownership, in general). In addition, boaters were concerned about congestion, lack of facilities, inadequate water depth, and conflict with other boaters.
- Most participants feel that the public sector has a strong role in providing facilities, especially boat ramps, pump outs, transient moorage and like facilities.
- When asked how state agencies could improve their services to boaters, participants were generally unaware which agencies provide which services. They believe that the agencies should better market what they do to the public and that services should be provided in an efficient manner.

Surveys

In 2002, IAC conducted an Internet-based survey of 20,000 boaters who had voluntarily registered e-mail addresses at the 2002 Seattle Boat Show. The results, while not statistically defensible data, are of interest.

When asked about "high need" facilities, the respondents indicated the following:

More transient moorage slips (according to 57% of respondents)

Additional floats or buoys (49%)
Additional loading floats or courtesy docks (49%)
More parking (37%)
Cleaner, better restrooms (34%)
Additional launch lanes (32%)
Launch ramp repair (30%)
Fuel services (25%)

Not surprisingly, there were clear differences between the responses of those who reported storing boats on trailers (boats generally less than 26 feet in length) versus those who store boats in a marina (boats generally over 26 feet in length). For example, the need for more parking was identified as a "high need" by 59% of the boaters using trailers, but only 12% of the marina-oriented boaters. Likewise, the need to add launch lanes was reported as a "high need" by 55% of the small boat owners, while adding launch lanes was reported as a "high need" by only 18% of the marina-oriented boaters. The needs identified as most in common among the different segments were additional loading floats or courtesy docks, presumably those floats or docks that can double as transient moorage.

There is less information available concerning the needs of the muscle-powered canoe or kayak. According to one study, "Many paddle boaters do not need (or really want) to use docks and ramps. Natural or modified shorelines can provide suitable access."[31] Anecdotal evidence tends to support this statement.[32]

[31] Humboldt Bay Trails Feasibility Study, Redwood Community Action Agency for the California Coastal Conservancy, December 2001
[32] Personal communication from the Washington Water Trails Association 2003

Responding to Need: Public Agencies Serving the Boating Community

The recreational boating community is served by a variety of government agencies at the federal, tribal, state, and local levels. From on-water law enforcement by county sheriffs to public launches or transient tie-ups, services are provided through sites, facilities, and public service oriented programs. The programs are summarized in the following table.

Government Agencies with an Important Role in Serving Recreational Boating			
Federal	*Access Sites*	*Facilities*	*Services*
Bureau of Land Management	✔	✔	
Bureau of Reclamation	✔	✔	
National Park Service	✔	✔	
US Army Corps of Engineers	✔	✔	✔ Safety programs, law enforcement
US Coast Guard			✔ Safety programs, law enforcement
US Fish and Wildlife Service	✔	✔	✔ Federal aid to states for sites and facilities
US Forest Service	✔	✔	
Tribal	✔	✔	✔ Law enforcement
State			
Dept of Natural Resources	✔	✔	✔ Information
Dept of Ecology			✔ Water quality certification
Dept of Fish and Wildlife	✔	✔	✔ Information
Dept of Health			✔ Marine sanitation
Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (IAC)			✔ Site and facility funding, information
Dept of Licensing			✔ Registration, fuel tax refunds
Puget Sound Water Quality Action Team			✔ Marine sanitation
State Parks	✔	✔	✔ Safety education, marine sanitation
Washington Sea Grant (U of W)			✔ Research, statistics
Local	✔	✔	✔ Law enforcement
Cities	✔	✔	✔ Law enforcement
Park Districts	✔	✔	✔ Information
Counties	✔	✔	✔ Law enforcement
Public Ports	✔	✔	✔ Information
Public Utility Districts	✔	✔	✔ Information

How Well is the Public Being Served?

Depending on the issue or the perspective, an observer may conclude that agency service to the boating public is highly successful or less than adequate.

One example of success appears to be boater safety. The US Coast Guards reports a national decline in boating-related fatalities between 1990 and 2001, at the same time the national recreational fleet grew from about 11 million to 12.8 million boats.[33]

More problematic are issues of physical access including adequate facilities. Based on information gathered from boaters, existing facilities are inadequate. Additions to the boating inventory in Washington State appear to be relatively few and slow to develop.

Public agencies, especially in the greater Puget Sound region, may be constrained by the fact that desirable marine recreation land may have been "built out." While boating is a popular activity, waterfront and marine recreation lands are in great demand for other uses, including competing types of recreation. IAC's 1995 *Outdoor Recreation Assessment and Policy Plan*, for example, found that people want to use water access sites primarily for walking and other non-boating recreation.[34]

Local agencies interested in acquiring marine recreation land must also compete with other interests, ranging from individual homebuilders to industrial buyers. As a result of extreme competition for these lands, land prices have become so high that it is difficult for local government to find adequate resources to purchase new sites.

Meanwhile, permit processes have become complex and expensive. A single-lane boat ramp project must go through virtually the same permit processes as a fully developed marina project, making smaller projects appear to be less cost effective. In a 2002 Internet survey of recent boating facility grant recipients, 90% of respondents reported permits for new projects as a "major problem."[35]

State agencies with authority to provide recreational facilities face the same obstacles faced by local agencies. In addition, state agencies have to contend with chronic under-funding of maintenance and site management.[36] Also, boating facilities must compete with all other facilities, from campsites to trails, and with other resource goals. The private sector responds to boating needs in the classic business sense of supply and demand.

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[33] Boating Statistics 2001 (COMDTPUB P16754.15), US Dept of Transportation, US Coast Guard

[34] *State of Washington Outdoor Recreation and Habitat Assessment and Policy Plan 1995-2001*, IAC, November 1995

[35] Reported to the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation via staff memo, 2002

[36] According to RCW 79A.20.005, "… operation and maintenance funding for state-owned fish and wildlife habitat, natural areas, parks, and other recreation lands has not kept pace with increasing demands…."

In general, the inventory of available launches, marinas, and boating-related businesses are all evidence of response to need. The extent to which need is being met appears in the eyes of many to be lacking.

Better Service Through a Washington "Marine Board"?

From time to time, boating advocates have promoted the concept of a central authority or clearing house for boating-related services. These advocates look to the Oregon State Marine Board (OSMB) as a possible model for Washington State.

See Issue 9 (page 49) for more discussion.

Part 2. IAC's Role in Recreational Boating

The Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (IAC) provides funding in the form of grants from the Boating Facilities Program (BFP) to public agencies for the purpose of acquiring and developing recreation land. IAC also provides important research and planning services to help guide wise investment of public funds.

IAC does not own or manage facilities. Its influence on marine recreation is through its ability to pay for all or part of those projects demanded by the public and made possible through the authority and management of local and state government agencies. IAC also provides important research and planning-related services.

Authority for IAC

IAC was created by a vote of the people in November 1964. The authority of Initiative 215, the "Marine Recreation Land Act," allowed for the creation of two important entities: 1) the outdoor recreation account (ORA, Fund 070) to be supported by unclaimed marine fuel tax refund monies, and 2) "a committee for outdoor recreation."

Initiative 215 was later codified as 43.99 RCW, now 79A.25 RCW, under which the IAC is authorized and its responsibilities outlined.

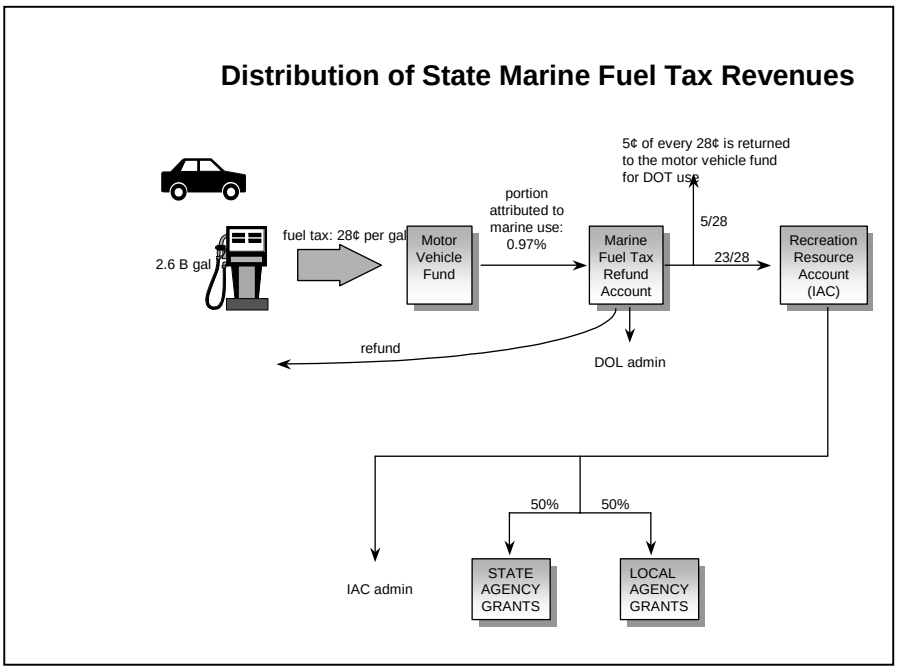
The Source of Boating Facilities Program Funds

The intent of Initiative 215 was in "providing for the use of monies, derived from existing motor vehicle fuel taxes paid by purchasers of fuel used in watercraft and not reclaimed by them as presently allowed by law, for the acquisition or improvement of land on fresh or salt water for marine recreational purposes."

The operator of a gasoline-powered boat, when purchasing gasoline for recreational purposes, pays the same gasoline taxes as the operator of an automobile or truck used on roadways.

Recreational boaters may apply to the state, through the Department of Licensing Fuel Tax Refund Section, for a refund of these gasoline taxes as allowed by Chapter 82.36 RCW. The refund-application process requires the boater to obtain a permit card to present to fuel retailers when purchasing fuel, fill out a claim form once a year, and submit original receipts.

As directed by RCW 79A.25.070, unclaimed marine fuel taxes are transferred to the recreation resource account. Generally, the amount transferred is based on an estimate of fuel consumption that is developed in cooperation among Licensing, Washington State Department of Transportation, and IAC. Currently, the BFP receives about $4 million per year as a result of the transfer.



How IAC Uses the Funds

IAC accomplishes two legislative directives for funds under Chapter 79A.25 RCW: 1) it provides grants to state and local agencies for marine recreation facilities, and 2) it pays for administrative expenses, including the costs of grant management and program planning.

Funds to agencies are distributed through the BFP in an open, competitive grant process. The BFP grant program is authorized under RCW 79A.25.080. As directed by law, "one share" of the available dollars goes to state agency projects and "one share" goes to local agency projects. Since the law only establishes the two "shares," each share represents 50 percent of the total available fund.

How Grants Work: The Project Selection Cycle

IAC is an eight-member board consisting of five citizen members appointed by the Governor together with the Commissioner of Public Lands, Director of Fish and Wildlife, and the Director of the Parks and Recreation Commission. The Committee, through its professional staff and director, oversees a number of grant programs and is also responsible for statewide recreation and open space planning.

As the neutral facilitator of the open, public process, IAC does not initiate projects. The agency relies on the initiative of local and state agencies to identify boating projects and prepare a grant application.

Applicant agencies select projects in a number of ways. Often a project is brought to the attention of an agency by a local citizen or citizen group. In other cases, property is identified by park and recreation professionals. Agencies will then select the most important projects to submit to the IAC for funding. Property can only be acquired from willing sellers.

Grant applications are reviewed by IAC staff for technical completeness and consistency with the applicant's current recreation plan. The projects then go through a peer-review process. Written grant applications and verbal presentations by applicants are evaluated by a standing program advisory committee team of 10-12 experts from state and local agencies and the general public using a series of prepared questions. The questions are designed to assess the overall value of the project to the recreational boating public.

Evaluators give the project a numeric score for each question. Scores from all the evaluators are combined to produce a single score for each project, and projects are ranked within each funding category based on this score.

The ranked list of scored projects is considered by the IAC at a public meeting where testimony from project sponsors and the general public is received. Based on project scores, testimony, and other policy assessments, the IAC establishes the final ranked list of projects. The list of local projects, determined annually, can be funded immediately. The list of state projects, determined biennially, is sent to the Governor's Office for review and transmittal to the Legislature for inclusion in the state's capital budget.

Some years, the IAC receives more requests for assistance than can be addressed with available funding. These additional requests are retained on a list of "alternates" if funding becomes available. For example, if an approved project is subsequently withdrawn due to an unwilling seller or an unacceptable price increase, the money that would have been spent on that project is then free to be used for the next highest ranked project remaining on the list of alternates.

The IAC enters into contractual agreements with project sponsors. The IAC reimburses the sponsors for eligible expenses, and monitors the progress of the acquisition or development to ensure it is consistent with the original proposal.

Occasionally an agency will encounter a change in cost or scope of a project. This can occur when an acquisition involves a number of property owners, some of who may be unwilling to sell. Also, there is sometimes a significant increase in appraised value of a property due to appreciation of the property during the lengthy project evaluation process, leading to either a need for a cost increase or reduction in the size of the acquisition. Significant changes in the cost or scope of a project may lead to withdrawal of the project if the changes cannot be justified or if the sponsor cannot find additional funding.

IAC's Boating Facilities Grant Investment

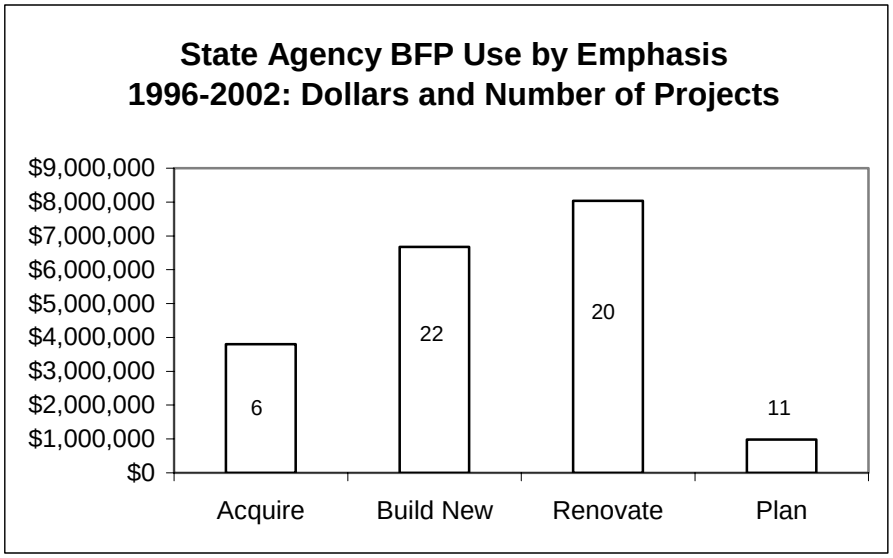
Since 1965, IAC has invested over $75 million in boating facilities statewide. IAC-funded state and local agency projects are found in all Washington state counties. Projects include parks and launch sites[37] that provide direct access to salt water, rivers, lakes, and streams; and transient facilities such as docks, ramps, floats and buoys intended to serve motor-powered boats.

A description of the funding made between 1964 and 1995 is found in the *Boating Facilities Program Policy Plan* (IAC, 1995). Funding trends since 1995 are discussed below.

The State Agency Share

Boating funds have been utilized by state agencies managing natural resources and authorized or mandated to provide public access for recreational purposes. The state agency beneficiaries of the program are the member agencies of the IAC: the Departments of Fish and Wildlife, Natural Resources, and the State Parks and Recreation Commission. Other agencies are potentially eligible, but participate infrequently (for example, General Administration). The Washington State Department of Transportation is technically eligible under state and federal law to provide water access from its rights of way but has never used boating facility funds.

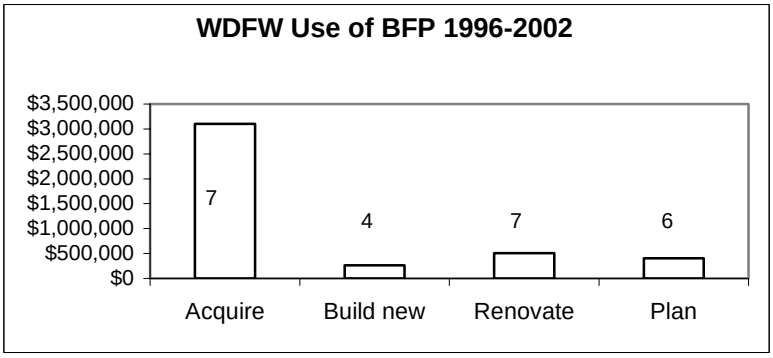
Chapter 43.99 RCW directs that boating facility program funds be used only for land acquisition and capital development. State policy recognizes spending for renovation (that is, the substantial improvement of an existing facility to provide for new opportunities) as a capital expenditure. Since 1995, the majority of "state share" grants have gone to renovate existing sites and facilities.



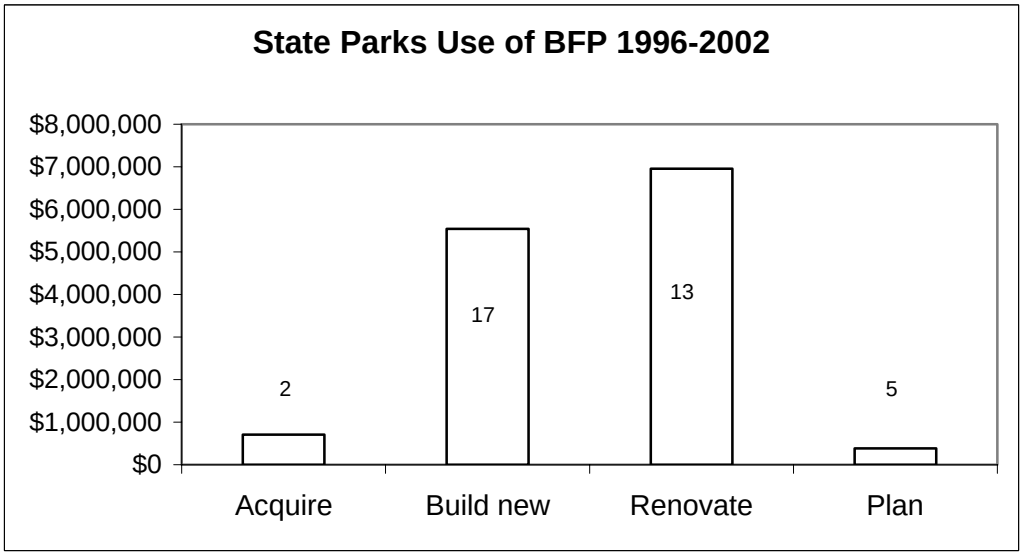
[37] According to records available through the Project Information System (PRISM), IAC has provided full or partial funding for nearly 300 boat launch sites statewide, approaching one-third of the statewide boat launch inventory.

An analysis of state agency-sponsored project descriptions indicates distinct differences in how the agencies provide for marine recreation.

The Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) typically provides a small-scale project on less than an acre of land to facilitate small-boat fishing access to a river or lake. Usually the project is simple, including a concrete plank boat ramp and a small gravel parking area with few if any other upland amenities for shore land activities. There are about 500 of these sites statewide.



The State Parks and Recreation Commission has used boating facilities program funds to develop major boating and shore land facilities, especially in its San Juan Islands and Puget Sound marine park system. State Parks projects tend to address marine recreation in all its forms, on and off shore, with particular emphasis on the needs of the boating public. Boat-oriented facilities include docks, floats, piers, and navigation aides.



The Department of Natural Resources sought and secured one grant between 1996 and 2002: $280,000 to improve boating access to Cypress Island.

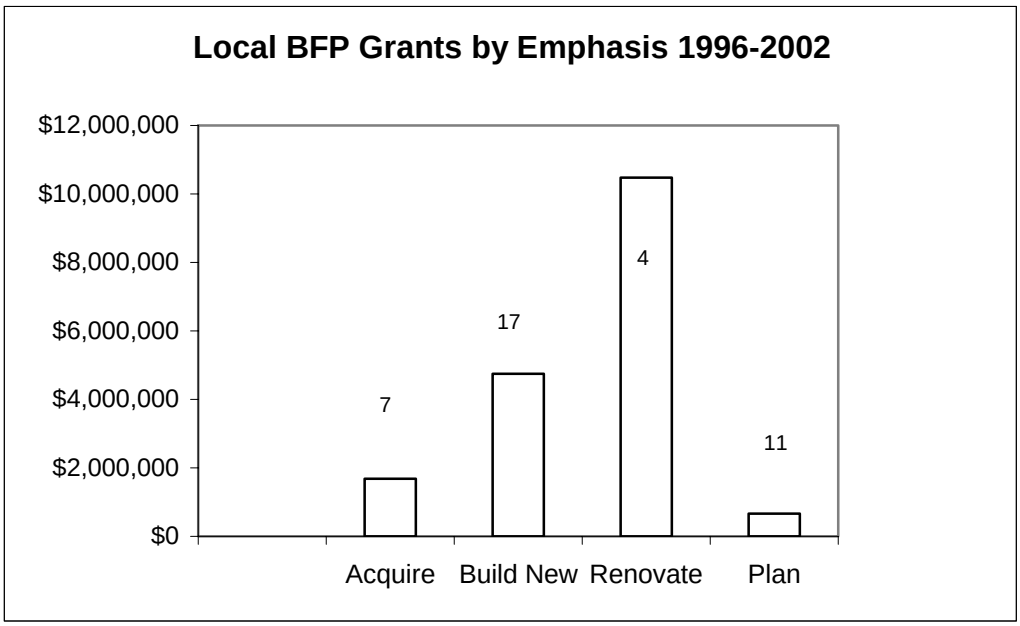
The Local Agency Share

As directed by law, IAC provides half of the Boating Facilities Program grant funds to local agencies including cities, counties, port districts, Native American tribes, and public utility districts.

The designers of local marine parks appear to recognize the strong public desire to recreate at the water access sites -- before, after, or instead of a boating-related activity. Where some state water access sites, especially WDFW launch sites, virtually ignore shoreline recreation, the local marine park typically gives shoreline recreation at least equal emphasis with on-water recreation.

Local marine parks will typically include upland amenities such as picnic benches, toilets, parking, and walkways. Upland amenities are in addition to boat-oriented facilities that generally include some combination of moorage, floats, piers, and launch ramps or lanes.

Most local projects serve the owners of watercraft who transport their boats via trailer. Local agencies tend to use their boating facilities grants as part of development projects, with an emphasis on renovation.



Does IAC Pay for Facilities Boaters Really Want?

The boater surveys described above resulted in clear needs identified by the recreational boating public. These needs are compared to IAC's funding policies in the following table.

High Needs Identified by Boaters*	***Can IAC Grants Address the Need?***
Transient moorage slips	Yes
Floats or buoys	Yes
Loading floats or courtesy docks	Yes
Parking	Yes
Cleaner, better restrooms	Yes, improved restrooms
Lanes	Yes
Launch ramp repair	Yes, renovation
Fuel services	No

**Boater needs identified in 2002 IAC Internet survey*
***Policies found in IAC Manual 9, BFP Policies and Project Selection*

It appears that IAC's funding is responsive. However, it should be noted that the state boating program created through Initiative 215 was never intended to fully fund statewide boating facility needs. Authors of the Initiative envisioned a modest program through which strategic properties could be acquired immediately and essential support facilities developed later.[38] The boating fund was to provide state funds as a means to leverage local resources. Today, it is clear that the Boating Facilities Program cannot be expected to pay for all the sites and facilities needed statewide.

Also, it is important to understand that IAC funding cannot address the pressing need for improved and expanded permanent moorage. While there is tremendous need to adapt aging permanent moorage facilities to a fleet featuring longer, wider recreational bots, IAC is constrained by the fact that public funds cannot be used to pay for exclusive use facilities.

[38] Personal communication, Mr. Tom Kincaid to IAC

Key Issues and IAC's Boating Facilities Program

IAC last issued a policy plan for the BFP in 1995. Nine key issues associated with recreational boating generally and IAC's grant program specifically were identified and address in the 1995 *Boating Facilities Program Plan*. The issues were

1. Land for boating access sites.
2. Appropriate levels of facility development with boating facilities grant funds.
3. IAC and other funding programs.
4. The amount of state gasoline tax attributed to recreational motorboat use
5. Restricting boating facilities funding to projects supporting motor-powered boating.
6. The need for expanded public participation in guiding funding decisions.
7. Sponsor match requirements and grant ceilings.
8. Renovation and/or maintenance and operation (M&O).
9. Forming a "Washington Marine Board."

All these issues remain relevant. Since 1995, substantial changes have occurred in the environment in which owners and managers work to address construction, renovation, and maintenance of the sites and facilities demanded by the boating public – calling for a review of previous issues and identification of new issues. The new, additional issues are

10. Escalating costs of work done in navigable waters.
11. Decline in money available to potential project sponsors.
12. Responding to growth and changes in the recreational boating fleet.
13. The need to continue to make participation in the BFP process more efficient.

Issue 1. Land for boating access sites.

The market for what little developable real waterfront property remains continues to be extraordinarily competitive and costly and therefore problematic for eligible agencies seeking new site acquisition. BFP funds are available for acquisition projects, but a grant ceiling of $750,000 per project may limit the program's ability to participate in acquisition. Since 1995, BFP funds have been used for 4 successful local acquisition projects, considerably less than one per year.

IAC's Current Role:

IAC encourages applications for grant-in-aid assistance in the acquisition of sites and facilities needed for recreational boating.

Actions needed:

IAC needs to consider offering more flexibility in grant ceilings. *See related text below*.

Issue 2. Appropriate levels of development with boating facilities grant funds.

The BFP is flexible in terms of the type of development for which program funds may be used. Occasionally, questions may arise on individual projects concerning specific improvements that may be required by local zoning or building codes, such as plantings, landscaping, or setbacks. IAC must comply with local requirements, and acknowledges that these requirements often contribute to a positive boating experience.

Related to this issue is the question of establishing a state standard for construction of boating facilities. State agencies have either engineering standards (State Parks) or established in-the-field practice (WDFW). Local agencies will turn to staff or retain engineering and design professionals for guidance.

IAC does not set design or construction standards. Although agency and Advisory Committee experience is shared with potential applicants and successful sponsors, it is the program's practice to give as much design and construction leeway as possible in recognition of inescapably unique local conditions. However, IAC is aware of and refers to standards published by the States Organization for Boating Access (SOBA). SOBA is a national organization that has drawn upon the collective experience of boating facilities managers from all states and several territories to publish excellent guidelines.

IAC's current role:

IAC seeks quality development of facilities serving the recreational boating public. IAC relies on applicant initiative and the guidance of its Advisory Committee in both technical and evaluation review to help ensure that quality projects emerge.

Actions needed:

IAC will continue to rely on applicant initiative and its Advisory Committee to identify quality facility development, while providing references to materials including those offered by the States Organization for Boating Access. IAC will also consider ways to provide more technical assistance to applicants.

Issue 3. IAC and other funding programs.

New since 1995 is the federal Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG) program. Authorized by Congress[39] and managed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the BIG program focuses on the needs of recreational boats 26 feet and larger, especially for transient tie-up facilities. IAC agreed to manage this program for Washington State.

BIG is considered as a complimentary program to the BFP, and is run as a separate program while leveraging existing agency resources including staff and a boating advisory committee. Funding is relatively modest: states are assured of $100,000 annually (Tier 1 proposals), and are given the opportunity to submit more expensive

[39] Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA 21), HR 2400-377, Section 7404, amending the Sport Fish Restoration Act of 1950.

proposals for national competition (Tier 2) with no assurance of funding.

Not new but complimentary are funds available to help pay for the needs of non-motor powered boats. These funds include the Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA), the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), and the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) "water access" category. IAC works with clients to direct their proposals to the fund with the best fit and opportunity for success.

IAC's role:

IAC is Washington State's "single point of contact" for BIG. IAC also manages the LWCF and WWRP programs. In 2003, the Legislature transferred responsibility for management of the ALEA program from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to the IAC.

Actions needed:

Future authorization of the BIG program would give the program more certainty and encourage participation. IAC will continue to cooperate with the US Fish and Wildlife Service and boating interests to communicate the results and benefits of program funding.

Issue 4. The amount of state gasoline tax attributed to recreational motorboat use.

The Boating Facilities Program is supported by unreclaimed user refunds of state motor vehicle fuel taxes; that is, highway taxes imposed on motor vehicle fuel (gasoline) used in recreational watercraft. The theory of the refund, claimed or not, is that the highway taxes collected from recreational boaters should provide a benefit to recreational boating, and not to highways on which boats are (obviously) not operated.

RCW 79A.25.030 assigns the Director of the Department of Licensing (DOL) the responsibility for determining the "amount or proportion of moneys paid… as motor vehicle fuel tax which is tax on marine fuel." This determination is done every four years. A variety of survey methods, including post card mailings and random sampling via telephone, have been used.[40]

The amount so determined is transferred from the State Treasurer to DOL into the marine fuel tax refund account. DOL pays refunds to eligible boaters making application from this account. After the time limit for refunds has passed, the State succeeds to the right to the funds left. The unreclaimed funds, less the modest amount needed for survey work and DOL administration, are transferred to the recreation resource account (for boating purposes) or the motor vehicle fund (for highway purposes).

Between 1990 and 2003, amounts transferred to the recreation resource account were

[40] The most recent study was conducted in 2000 –2001 via a random digit dialing telephone survey. The study estimated that 0.97% of motor vehicle fuel could be attributed to recreational motorboat use.

calculated on a fuel tax rate of $0.18 per gallon, although the actual fuel tax rate was $0.23 per gallon: $0.05 of the motor vehicle fuel taxes paid for boating purposes was transferred to the motor vehicle fund. In 2003, the Legislature raised the fuel tax to $0.28 per gallon, and made a provision that amounts to be transferred to the recreation resource account would be calculated on $0.23 per gallon, although in an incremental manner.[41] In short, boaters continue to pay the full state motor vehicle fuel tax but do not receive full benefit of the tax.

The new calculation does result in an increase of funds available for distribution through the Boating Facilities Program.[42]

IAC's Current Role:

IAC works cooperatively with the Department of Licensing and other interested agencies in finding an accurate and cost-effective method for determining the amount of motor vehicle fuel tax paid by recreational boaters. IAC believes it is appropriate to return full value of the fuel tax to the boaters who pay the tax.

Actions Needed:

Continued cooperative efforts among state agencies and others are required to ensure that an accurate and cost effective method is used to determine recreational fuel use.

Issue 5. Restricting funding to projects that support powerboats.

The BFP focus on projects that predominantly serve the needs of the gasoline-powered (motor) boat is consistent with the origin of the BFP funds: motor vehicle fuel taxes, as described above. IAC believes that it is fair and logical to tie the origin of the funds to the recreational motorboat public. The BFP is a true "user pay" or user fee program, with program benefits returning to those paying.

This is not to say that IAC insists that BFP-supported projects require exclusive use by those operating motorboats. Recognizing the need to maximize public benefit of the investment of public dollars, it has been IAC policy since 1995 to encourage diverse, compatible recreational uses of boating facilities provided through the BFP as long as recreational boating has priority.

IAC's current role:

IAC is responsible for management of the outdoor recreation account as provided by law, code, and agency policy.

Actions needed:

[41] Beginning with $0.19 per gallon in the 2003-04 biennium and increasing $0.01 per biennium until the $0.23 level is reached.
[42] Each $0.01 results in an estimated $400,000 to $500,000 transfer to the outdoor recreation account, based on 2003 dollars.

IAC has articulated its policy concerning use of funds derived from the motor vehicle fuel tax. At the same time, it will continue to work with clients interested in human- or wind-powered boating to direct their proposals to the fund (ALEA, LWCF, WWRP) with the best fit.

Issue 6. The need for expanded public participation in guiding funding decisions.

In 1995, IAC established a standing advisory committee for the Boating Facilities Program. Made up of members of the boating public and managing agencies, the advisory committee has been invaluable for bringing diverse perspectives to the open project selection process.

The boating public is able to influence projects even before they are brought to the competitive process. Boaters will approach site managers with requests for additional or improved sites and facilities. These requests will be considered in local processes. The law governing the outdoor recreation account, and BFP, requires all local agency grant proposals to be supported by a long-range plan for developing outdoor recreation facilities.[43] Citizen involvement is a necessary and indispensable part of the development of the required plan.

As the neutral facilitator of the BFP process, IAC does not take a direct role in shaping local plans. For this reason, IAC normally does not work directly with the boating public. Nevertheless, it is simply good business practice to solicit public involvement whenever it considers any action that affects the interests of the boating public.

IAC's current role:

As a result of the 1995 policy plan, IAC established and maintains a Boating Facilities Program Advisory Committee.

Actions needed:

IAC will continue to call upon its Advisory Committee and the boating public for advice and guidance on how best to provide effective and meaningful public service.

Issue 7. Sponsor match requirements and grant ceilings.

Local agencies seeking grant-in-aid assistance from the Boating Facilities Program are asked to provide a matching share. The matching share requirement is found in the Washington Administrative Code and IAC policy and is based on statute.[44] Theories of the matching share include the demonstration of a local agency applicant's commitment to a project and a mechanism to help ensure broader distribution of available funds.

Since 1995, IAC has adjusted the match requirement in favor of applicant agencies at least once, lowering the required match from 50 to 33 percent.

[43] RCW 79A.25.120
[44] RCW 79A.25.080(2)

The grant ceiling is a tool that can be used to adjust program goals. The theory of lower ceilings (caps) is to allocate funds to as many applicants as possible. The theory of higher ceilings is to encourage more sophisticated projects while ensuring that funds are totally committed each year.

Grant ceilings have also been adjusted since 1995, again in favor of the applicants through a higher maximum amount.

Current IAC policy is to review matching requirements and grant ceilings on a biennial schedule. It may be that a two-year cycle is not sufficient to identify definite trends. In view of the statutory requirement to examine and adjust the amount of fuel tax available on a four-year cycle, it makes sense to reconsider the biennial policy and put both the fuel tax survey and match-ceiling review on the same schedule.

Also since 1995, public boating facility managers have seen dramatic declines in resources. As will be discussed in more detail below, the decline can be attributed to multiple economic and political circumstances. In brief, there is less money available to local and state managers while regulatory costs are increasing.

IAC's current role:

IAC requires a matching share and establishes grant ceilings. By policy, the amount of each is reviewed on a biennial schedule.

Actions needed:

It appears more efficient to schedule the match/ceiling review to coincide with the fuel use survey on a four-year schedule. One benefit of doing so is to give reviewers accurate information on fuel use and estimated available funding.

Issue 8. Renovation and/or maintenance and operation (M&O).

State law restricts boating funds to land acquisition, capital development, and periodic dredging under limited circumstances.[45] State policy recognizes renovation as a capital expenditure, as renovation usually helps a facility provide increased and sometimes new opportunity for public use.

As described above (*IAC's Boating Facility Investment*) the boating market has responded by demanding assistance with renovation more than any other eligible activity. Demand for renovation has been consistent since the origins of the program in the mid-1960s.

The high demand for renovation assistance sometimes raises the question of how well sites are being maintained. However, it is important to consider the physical demands of the marine environment on built facilities. Wave action, salt water, changing tides, high winds on lakes, changing water levels on reservoirs, river flooding, currents, and other environmental factors combine to take a toll on the best designed and constructed

[45] RCW 79A.25.080

facilities.

Higher use by a growing fleet of increasingly larger and more powerful motorboats also contributes to the physical demands on facilities. Routine maintenance often cannot keep up with the impacts from the fleet.

Compounding the issue is the decline in resources available to managers, referenced several times in this document.

The Oregon State Marine Board (OSMB) has responded to identical circumstances by developing a maintenance assistance program (MAP). Under its MAP, OSMB will provide modest annual funds to grant recipients on a sliding scale.

IAC's current role:

In view of the circumstances described above, the market's response is reasonable and appropriate. IAC can expect that renovation will continue to dominate the annual list of grant-in-aid requests in the Boating Facilities Program.

Actions needed:

IAC can encourage facility managers to use best design and engineering practices (e.g., SOBA guidelines) to provide facilities appropriate for the marine environment. IAC should examine the OSMB maintenance assistance program to determine its applicability in Washington.

Issue 9. Forming a "Washington Marine Board."

The Oregon State Marine Board (OSMB) was created by the Oregon State Legislature in 1959. OSMB combines the functions of boater safety and education, law enforcement, registration, and facility funding in one agency. In Washington State, each of these functions is addressed by a separate agency or more than one agency.

The "marine board" concept is perceived to offer increased efficiency by combining boating-related services. Whether this perception would prove to be correct is uncertain.

For example, boating registration is managed by the Department of Licensing. While it makes sense to combine boating-related tasks and responsibilities, it also makes sense to combine all licensing and registration responsibilities. Whether it increases efficiency by taking a small portion of Licensing's duties and giving it to a boating-related entity is uncertain.

Since 1995, however, state government has made considerable progress in finding efficiency through electronic services: the Internet is proving to be an incredibly valuable tool for agencies and the public. In a very real sense, a "virtual" marine board may already exist on the web and accessible through a series of web links.

If the desire for a marine board centers on the idea of advocacy for boaters, the question must be asked whether it is appropriate for government to be the advocate.

IAC's current role:

IAC provides funding for boating sites and facilities, conducts original research, and provides boater information via the Internet.

Actions needed:

There is an on-going need for improvements in the efficient delivery of government services to the public. It is uncertain whether formation of a "marine board" would provide increased efficiency. IAC is prepared to do further research if it can be justified by broad public interest and support.

New Issues

Since the *Boating Facilities Program Policy Plan* was published in 1995, new issues have emerged. The issues have been identified through surveys, interviews, and focus groups with managing agencies and boaters.

Issue 10. Escalating costs of work done in navigable waters.

Issues 2 and 8 discussed the difficulty of working in the marine environment. Since 1995, an increasingly complex regulatory environment has resulted in rising costs of work done in navigable waterways. This is due primarily to the need to plan for minimizing impacts to threatened or endangered aquatic species, especially salmon, through permit processes. Studies required for permitting are time consuming and expensive.

Potential applicants for BFP support tell of permit waiting lists up to two years long. Permit requirements are uncertain: no one can predict the extent of mitigation required for a water-related project. As a result, a project may be changed considerably from the time of application to the BFP program and the time permits are issued.

IAC's current role:

IAC allows permit costs to be reimbursed as an eligible project expense. Planning grants addressing permits/A&E have been allowed since 1995.

Action needed:

If IAC were to raise the ceiling on its BFP grants, more funds would be available for permit purposes.

Issue 11. Decline in money available to potential project sponsors.

Since 1995 there has been a substantial loss of revenue sources at all levels of government. Property tax reductions as the result of referendum in 1997 and the Legislative repeal of certain state motor vehicle excise taxes in 2000 resulted in significant reductions in state agency resources and in state assistance to local government. Accounts or funds reduced included the city police and fire protection assistance account, the municipal sales and use tax equalization account, the county sales and use tax equalization account, the county criminal justice assistance account, the municipal criminal justice assistance account, the county public health account, and the distressed county assistance account. General fund budgets have been reduced across the board.

With more competition for limited resources, finding dollars or in-kind value to provide a local matching share for a capital project is increasingly difficult for virtually all entities providing boating facilities. Further, it may be extremely difficult for to pay for the additional maintenance and operation costs required of new or improved facilities.

IAC's current role:

IAC is an important source of funds for agencies seeking to provide sites and facilities for boaters.

Actions needed:

With an increase in funding available through BFP, IAC should consider adjusting grant match and ceiling levels in favor of applicants.

Issue 12. Responding to growth and changes in the recreational boating fleet.

As noted previously, recent data has confirmed changes in the recreational boating fleet. There are more boats at ramps and docks and on the water, and people are buying and using boats that are measurably larger.

The need for additional sites and facilities may be obvious. Less obvious is the impact of the increased length, hull, and height of the fastest-growing segment of the fleet. Dock and slip facilities built in the 1960s, 70s, and 80s for smaller numbers and smaller sized boats may become obsolete in the near future.

Current IAC policy focuses the BFP program on the needs of trailerable boats. This policy reflects the facts that the majority of the fleet are boats taken to the water on trailers. Many of these trailerable boats are relatively large with powerful engines.

IAC's current role:

The Boating Facilities Program is available to help meet the need for additional transient sites and facilities, including major renovations that may be needed to help a facility meet current demands. BFP funds cannot be used to help pay for renovation of

permanent moorage facilities.

Actions needed:

As IAC considers issues related to obsolete recreation facilities and the impact on grant project agreements, it needs to be mindful of the role of the BFP investment in aging transient facilities that cannot serve a growing recreational fleet.

Issue 13. Continuing to make participation in the BFP process more efficient.

While appreciated as a reliable source of funds, BFP is perceived as time consuming and therefore costly. It is most common to hear this concern from smaller agencies with limited or no staff, but even larger agencies with more resources have difficulty making a BFP application a priority among the variety of demands they confront.[46]

The greatest concern is travel to multiple meetings. Meetings include the grant application workshop, a technical review of applications, and a final evaluation/scoring meeting. Some applicants will make a point to travel to the IAC's Board meeting where the final funding recommendation is made. Not all meetings are required, but applicants have the perception that attending meetings will somehow contribute to a successful application. Travel costs money that is not always available, and takes staff or, in the case of smaller communities, volunteers from their regular duties and responsibilities.

Additional concerns are expressed about the complexity of forms, the need for computer software and support, and the time it takes to manage an application.

IAC's current role:

IAC manages multiple grant programs. The programs have varied amounts of funding available, from a few hundred thousand dollars to tens of millions of dollars. IAC attempts to address its responsibilities to manage all competitive processes in an open public manner, treating all applicants equitably and fairly, while gathering enough information from applicants to make fair evaluation possible and to ensure accountability for the allocation of public funds.

Actions needed:

An agency initiative to streamline and simplify grant application and evaluation processes would be a potential benefit to all clients. IAC should consider maximum use of technology from closed circuit TV to the Internet to find ways to reduce the resources applicants need to participate in its grant programs.

[46] Comments heard at agency focus groups, summer 2003.

Implementing the Actions Needed, 2003-2012

Action:	Implementation:
Action 1. IAC needs to consider offering more flexibility in grant ceilings.	Two scenarios are at work during the next five biennia (10 years). One, each biennium will see an additional $0.01 of the motor vehicle fuel tax become available to the marine fuel refund account and the recreation resource account. Two, DOL will study the amount of motor vehicle fuel use attributable to recreational boating at least twice. As funding to the BFP increases, IAC's Board should consider raising the grant ceiling. Agency staff has the responsibility to inform the Board of changes in funding and to make appropriate recommendations at least every four years.
Action 2. IAC will continue to rely on applicant initiative and its Advisory Committee to identify quality facility development, while providing references to materials including those offered by the States Organization for Boating Access. IAC will also consider ways to provide more technical assistance to applicants.	IAC staff will keep current on state-of-the-art references and will provide information and referrals as requested.
Action 3. Future authorization of the BIG program would give the program more certainty and encourage participation.	IAC will continue to cooperate with the US Fish and Wildlife Service and boating interests to communicate the results and benefits of program funding.
Action 4. Continued cooperative efforts among state agencies and others are required to ensure that an accurate and cost effective method is used to determine recreational fuel use.	IAC staff shall make every effort to cooperate fully with the Department of Licensing and other partners to ensure implementation of this action.

Action 5. IAC has articulated its policy concerning use of funds derived from the motor vehicle fuel tax. At the same time, it will continue to work with clients interested in human- or wind-powered boating to direct their proposals to the fund (ALEA, LWCF, WWRP) with the best fit.	IAC grant managers will continue to find the best fit for project proposals.
Action 6. IAC will continue to call upon its Advisory Committee and the boating public for advice and guidance on how best to provide effective and meaningful public service.	IAC shall convene the Advisory Committee as needed for work related to policies and procedures concerning the Boating Facilities Program. When proposing policy or rule changes, IAC shall use involve the broader boating public through cost-effective open public processes.
Action 7. It appears more efficient to schedule the match/ceiling review to coincide with the fuel use survey on a four-year schedule. One benefit of doing so is to give reviewers accurate information on fuel use and estimated available funding.	IAC staff shall immediately propose this schedule to the agency Board and shall carry out the Board's decision.
Action 8. IAC can encourage facility managers to use best design and engineering practices (e.g., SOBA guidelines) to provide facilities appropriate for the marine environment. IAC should examine the Oregon State Marine Board maintenance assistance program to determine its applicability in Washington.	IAC staff will keep current on state-of-the-art references and will provide information and referrals concerning best practices as requested. In addition, staff will study the concept of a maintenance assistance program and report to the IAC Board no later than 2005.
Action 9. There is an on-going need for improvements in the efficient delivery of government services to the public. It is uncertain whether formation of a "marine board" would provide increased efficiency. IAC is prepared to do further research if it can be justified by broad public interest and support.	Broad public interest and support can be expressed through the Governor, Legislature, or the IAC's Board. IAC staff will conduct the necessary research upon direction from these sources.

Action 10. If IAC were to raise the ceiling on its BFP grants, more funds would be available for permit purposes.	Same as Action 1.
Action 11. With an increase in funding available through BFP, IAC should consider adjusting grant match and ceiling levels in favor of applicants.	Same as Actions 1 and 11.
Action 12. As IAC considers issues related to obsolete recreation facilities and the impact on grant project agreements, it needs to be mindful of the role of the BFP investment in aging transient facilities that cannot serve the growth of the recreational fleet.	Any staff work done on the issue of obsolete facilities will include boating facilities.
Action 13. An agency initiative to streamline and simplify grant application and evaluation processes would be a potential benefit to all clients. IAC should consider maximum use of technology from closed circuit TV to the Internet to find ways to reduce the resources applicants need to participate in its grant programs.	Beginning no later than 2004, IAC staff will take steps to find means to streamline grant application for all programs. The steps will include the identification of affected stakeholders, an open process to solicit opinion and suggestions, the establishment of partnerships with other agencies and organizations, case studies of grant processes in other agencies and other states, examination of the effective use of media, and the development of a report with recommendations to the IAC's Board. The goal is to reduce the amount of time and travel required to apply for a BFP grant.